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# Free or paid control panel on your VPS: what the licence buys you

VPS & Servers

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# Free or paid control panel on your VPS: what the licence buys you

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**The short answer:** paid panels (**cPanel and WHM, Plesk, Webuzo**) come with a vendor behind them, updates that arrive on their own, reselling and tools to bring accounts over from other servers. Free panels (**HestiaCP, CloudPanel**) do the essentials with no licence, but when something breaks the help is the documentation and the community, and the work is yours. **Paying is worth it** when you sell hosting to clients, have many accounts or are coming from another panel; for a few sites of your own, run by someone at ease with SSH, free is enough.

## The two families side by side

| Area | Paid: cPanel and WHM, Plesk, Webuzo | Free: HestiaCP, CloudPanel |
|---|---|---|
| **Licence** | Paid, per server. We sell them as a server option: cPanel Solo Cloud (1 account), Admin Cloud (5), Pro Cloud (30) and Premier Cloud (100); Plesk Web Admin, Web Pro and Web Host, when you order or through a support ticket; Webuzo only through a support ticket. | No licence. |
| **How many sites or accounts** | Depends on the licence: with cPanel, the number of accounts; with Plesk, up to 10 domains on Web Admin, 30 on Web Pro and unlimited on Web Host. | No licence limit: the limit is the server. |
| **Vendor support** | There is a vendor team behind the product. With a licence bought from us, first-line help is ours, through a support ticket, and we escalate to the vendor. | No paid support in the documentation: HestiaCP has its forum; CloudPanel, Discord and GitHub. |
| **Updates** | On cPanel and Plesk they arrive on their own by default (automatic updates on). | By your command: on HestiaCP, `apt update && apt upgrade`; on CloudPanel, `clp-update`, with a server image taken first. |

| Area | Paid: cPanel and WHM, Plesk, Webuzo | Free: HestiaCP, CloudPanel |
|---|---|---|
| **Features** | Built for people who sell hosting: e-mail, DNS, accounts with packages, WordPress tools (on Plesk, WP Toolkit is limited on Web Admin). | Narrower, each in its own way: HestiaCP brings e-mail and DNS; CloudPanel brings neither, but has site types for Node.js and Python. |
| **Reselling** | WHM gives an account reseller status, with its own privileges and nameservers. Webuzo has resellers with privileges and plans; Plesk has resellers on the Web Host edition only. | Neither describes reselling: HestiaCP has users with packages of limits; CloudPanel has roles (Admin, Site Manager, User). |
| **Moving between servers** | With a tool: WHM's Transfer Tool copies accounts, packages and configuration from another cPanel, and from Plesk too; Plesk Migrator brings them from Plesk, cPanel and DirectAdmin; Webuzo imports from cPanel, DirectAdmin and Plesk. | More by hand: HestiaCP only restores HestiaCP or VestaCP backups; on CloudPanel you move site by site (files and database). |
| **Security** | Fixes pushed by the vendor, without waiting for you. | Good foundations (HestiaCP installs a firewall and Fail2Ban; CloudPanel ships a firewall with rules and Basic Auth), but fixes only go in when you update. |
| **Who fixes it when it breaks** | The panel has a vendor that fixes it. The server and the system are still yours: the VPS is unmanaged. | You, with the documentation and the community. |

## When paying is worth it

1. **You sell hosting to clients or resell accounts.** You need packages, resellers and a panel your clients already know. **Installing cPanel and WHM**.

2. **You are coming from another server with cPanel, Plesk or DirectAdmin.** The paid panels' migration tools bring the accounts over in one go; with the free ones, it is site by site.

3. **You run many WordPress sites** and want dedicated tools to manage them: **installing Plesk** or **installing Webuzo**.

**When free is enough:**

You have a few sites of your own and are at ease with SSH. If you want e-mail and DNS on the server, **HestiaCP** gives you both with no licence; if you only run PHP, Node.js or Python apps and e-mail lives elsewhere, **CloudPanel** is simpler. The two are compared in **HestiaCP or CloudPanel**.

**Free does not mean safe on its own.**

There are free panels we do not recommend: aaPanel and CyberPanel have had serious security flaws, used in mass attacks on servers. And **switching families later costs you**: none of the paid panels' migration tools lists HestiaCP or CloudPanel as a source, so moving from a free panel to a paid one is done by hand, site by site and mailbox by mailbox. Webuzo, HestiaCP and CloudPanel need a freshly installed system: a system reinstall is requested in a support ticket.

NEED A HAND?

Want to move to a paid panel on the server you already have, or not sure which licence fits? Tell us how many sites and accounts you will run.

Open a support ticket →

SEE ALSO

- Which control panel to install on your VPS: cPanel, Plesk, Webuzo, HestiaCP or CloudPanel
- Installing cPanel and WHM on your VPS, step by step
- Installing HestiaCP on your VPS, step by step: a free panel with e-mail
- Installing CloudPanel on your VPS, step by step: a free panel for PHP, Node and Python apps
- Managed or unmanaged VPS: which to choose and who does what

## MozOut International

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